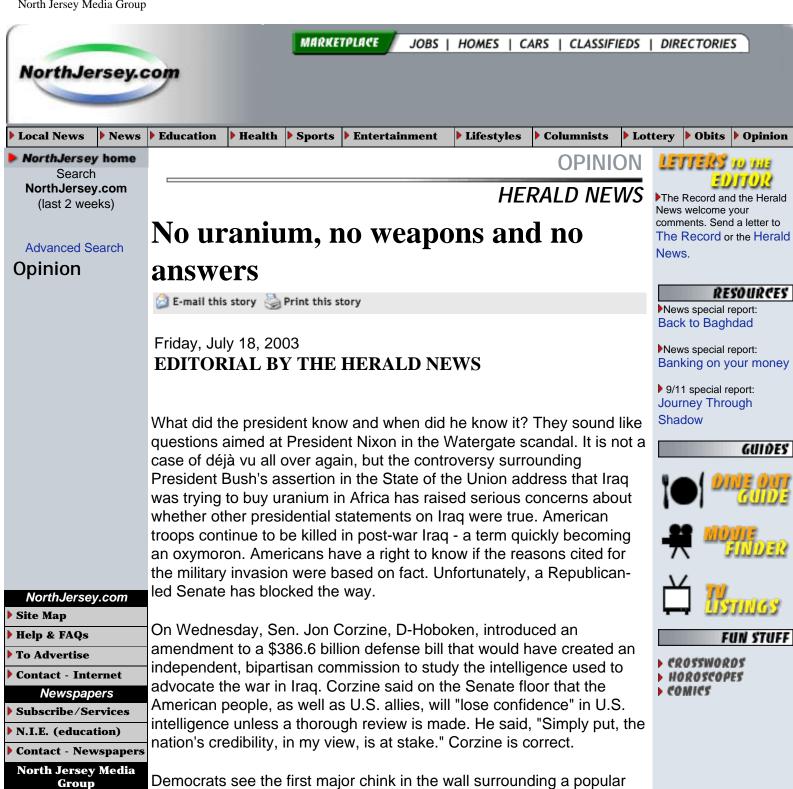
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president. However, Corzine's amendment is not partisan as Sen. Ted

Stevens, R-Alaska, claims. Corzine told the Herald News on Thursday

Committee, didn't see it that way. He said, "This is an attempt to smear the president of the United States, and I shall not permit that if I can avoid it." Corzine described Stevens' remarks as "over the top."

Stevens' party loyalty is duly noted. But a bipartisan commission would not be a free pass to smear Bush. It would provide the American people

that the purpose of the amendment was to "de-politicize" the

controversy. Stevens, the chairman of the Senate Appropriations

CIA Director George J. Tenet willingly became the administration's whipping boy, accepting ultimate responsibility for the error. That still does not answer the question, "How did bogus intelligence get into the president's speech?" It does not explain why no weapons of mass destruction have been found in Iraq or why no link between Iraq and al-Qaeda has been proved. Corzine's proposed commission would have found those answers and more. But it went down to defeat by a 51-45 vote.

Republicans also criticized the proposed commission as inappropriate while U.S. troops are still in Iraq. When is it appropriate? After more Americans are killed?

British Prime Minister Tony Blair's address to Congress did not bolster the Republican's position. Alluding to the claim that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction, Blair said, "Let us say one thing. If we are wrong, we will have destroyed a threat that at its least is responsible for inhumane carnage and suffering. That is something I am confident history will forgive." That may be noble. That may be accurate. But the American public was told that Iraq was developing weapons of mass destruction. Support for the invasion was based on Iraq's WMD as fact. There was no possibility of "if we are wrong."

U.S. credibility is on the on the line; U.S. troops literally are on the line.

"If you are going to live in a world where the option of pre-emptive force is on the table" then our intelligence must be "credible" and carried out with "integrity," Corzine said on Thursday.

That is sound foreign policy. The American people need answers. Too bad the Senate doesn't feel the same way.







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